

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

171514Z Aug 05

UNCLAS ANKARA 004841

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ASEC](#) [KCRM](#) [KNNP](#) [MNUC](#) [PARM](#) [PTER](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: NUCLEAR SMUGGLING IN TURKEY: ALLEGED URANIUM  
OFFERED FOR SALE IN ISTANBUL

REF: 2004 STATE 235088

1. Summary: On August 16 and 17, 2005, Turkish press reported the arrest of 2 individuals suspected of attempting to sell enriched uranium. EXBS Advisor made contact with MFA and Turkish Atomic Energy Authority (TAEK) representatives to confirm the media reports. Both MFA and TAEK have offered to provide summaries of their findings as they become available. Post will continue to investigate this matter and report our findings. End Summary.

2. On August 16 and 17, 2005, Turkish press reported the arrest of 2 individuals suspected of attempting to sell enriched uranium. Following is a summary of the information reported by the Anatolian News Agency, the source for all other news reports we have seen:

-- Two people were arrested on charges of attempting to sell 173 grams of enriched uranium brought to Turkey from the Russian Federation. The two individuals are Turkish citizens. The estimated value of the uranium is \$7 million.

-- Suspects were caught while trying to sell 173 grams of uranium in the Harem district of Istanbul to policemen, who posed as buyers.

-- Police officers stated that 173 grams of uranium was enough to meet the electricity needs of New York City for 1 year.

-- According to the press reports, TAEK Cekmece Nuclear Research and Training Center examined the uranium and concluded that the mentioned uranium contained 17% of U-235 enrichment, the rest was composed of U-238 with a low amount of impurities.

3. EXBS Advisor contacted both MFA and TAEK to gather additional information about the incident and the uranium. MFA is investigating the reports further. TAEK confirmed that:

-- The seized material has been analyzed by the Cekmece Nuclear Research and Training Center.

-- It was determined that the material is 173 grams of uranium oxide powder that contains U-235 isotope with a 17% enrichment ratio.

-- The estimated value of the uranium powder is \$1,500.

-- The powder is being held at the Cekmece Center awaiting further instruction.

Both MFA and TAEK agreed to provide additional information as it becomes available.

4. Post will continue to follow this incident and will provide updates as new information becomes available. Point of contact for information is EXBS Advisor Kevin Lyon, tel 90-312-455-5555, email [lyonk@state.gov](mailto:lyonk@state.gov) (unclas), [lyonkm@state.gov](mailto:lyonkm@state.gov) (clas).

MCELDOWNEY